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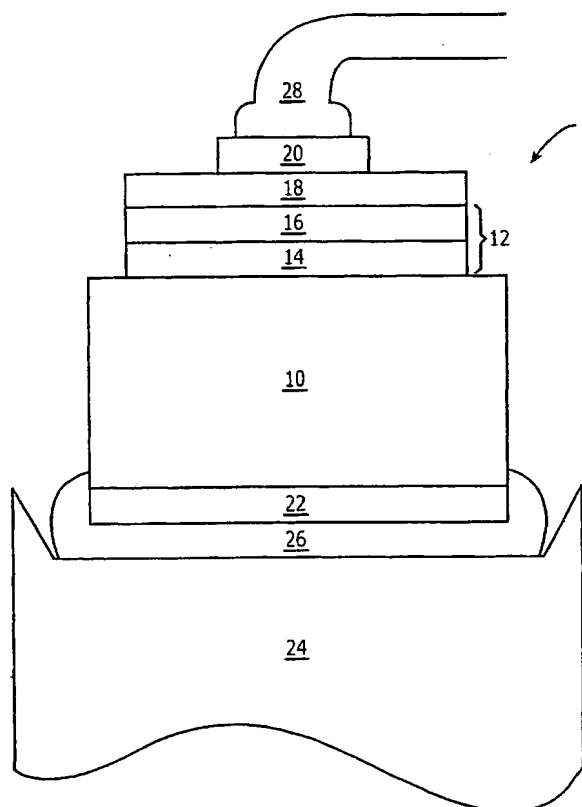
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(54) Title: **ULTRA-THIN OHMIC CONTACTS FOR P-TYPE NITRIDE LIGHT EMITTING DEVICES AND METHODS OF FORMING**



(57) Abstract: A semiconductor based Light Emitting Device (LED) can include a p-type nitride layer and a metal ohmic contact, on the p-type nitride layer. The metal ohmic contact can have an average thickness of less than about 25 Å and a specific contact resistivity less than about 10^{-3} ohm-cm^2 .

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ULTRA-THIN OHMIC CONTACTS FOR P-TYPE NITRIDE LIGHT EMITTING DEVICES AND METHODS OF FORMING

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

5 The present application is related to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/591,353; Filed July 27, 2004 entitled *Ultra-Thin Ohmic Contacts for P-Type Nitride Light Emitting Devices* by Raffetto et al. and to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/639705; Filed December 28, 2004 entitled *Ultra-Thin Ohmic Contacts for P-Type Nitride Light Emitting Devices* by Raffetto, the disclosures of
10 which are hereby incorporated herein by reference in their entireties.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

 The present invention relates to semiconductor devices, and more particularly to light emitting devices having an ohmic contact formed on a Group III nitride-based
15 epitaxial layer.

BACKGROUND

 Light emitting diodes and laser diodes are well known solid state electronic devices capable of generating light upon application of a sufficient voltage. Light
20 emitting diodes and laser diodes may be generally referred to as light emitting devices (LEDs). Light emitting devices generally comprise a p-n junction formed in an epitaxial layer grown on a substrate such as sapphire, silicon, silicon carbide, gallium arsenide and the like. The wavelength distribution of the light generated by the LED depends on the material from which the p-n junction is fabricated and the structure of
25 the thin epitaxial layers that comprise the active region of the device.

 Typically, an LED includes an n-type substrate, an n-type epitaxial region formed on the substrate and a p-type epitaxial region formed on the n-type epitaxial region. In order to facilitate the application of a voltage to the device, an anode ohmic contact is formed on a p-type region of the device (typically, an exposed p-type
30 epitaxial layer) and a cathode ohmic contact is formed on an n-type region of the device (such as the substrate or an exposed n-type epitaxial layer).

 Because it may be difficult to make highly conductive p-type Group III-nitride materials (such as GaN, AlGaN, InGaN, AlInGaN, and AlInN), lack of current

spreading in the p-type layer may be a limiting factor in the performance of LEDs formed from such materials. Accordingly, it may be desirable to form an ohmic contact over as much of the surface area of the exposed p-type layer as possible in order to induce current to pass through as much of the active region of the device as possible. However, providing a large anode contact may be detrimental to device performance in some respects. It is typically desirable to extract as much light as possible out of a light emitting diode. Since the anode ohmic contact generally comprises a metal layer, light generated in the active region of the LED may be partially absorbed in the ohmic contact, reducing the overall luminescent efficiency of the device.

In some devices, it may be desirable to form a reflective metal layer over the exposed p-type layer, so that light that would normally exit the device through the p-type layer is reflected back into the device to be extracted through the substrate. However, highly reflective metals such as aluminum and silver do not form good ohmic contacts to p-type nitride materials. Thus, an ohmic contact is typically provided between the p-type nitride layer and the reflector. Reducing absorption in the ohmic contact remains a concern in such devices.

Accordingly, there is a need for improved ohmic contact structures and methods of forming ohmic contact structures on p-type nitride materials.

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SUMMARY

Embodiments according to the invention can provide ultra-thin ohmic contacts for p-type nitride light emitting devices and methods of forming. Pursuant to these embodiments, a semiconductor based Light Emitting Device (LED) can include a p-type nitride layer and a metal ohmic contact, thereon, where the metal ohmic contact has an average thickness of less than about 25 Å and a specific contact resistivity less than about 10^{-3} ohm-cm². The metal ohmic contact can comprise Pt.

In some embodiments according to the invention, the metal ohmic contact has an average thickness less than about 20 Å. In some embodiments according to the invention, the metal ohmic contact has an average thickness between about 13 Å and about 18 Å. In some embodiments according to the invention, the metal ohmic contact has an average thickness of about 15 Å. In some embodiments according to the invention, the metal ohmic contact has an average thickness less than about 10 Å.

In some embodiments according to the invention, the metal ohmic contact covers less than about 67% of the p-type nitride layer measured via an Auger analysis of the metal ohmic contact. In some embodiments according to the invention, the metal ohmic contact covers a portion of the p-type nitride layer and a remaining
5 portion of the p-type nitride layer is un-covered by the metal ohmic contact.

In some embodiments according to the invention, the metal ohmic contact has an average thickness less than about 5 Å. In some embodiments according to the invention, the metal ohmic contact covers less than about 47% of the p-type nitride layer measured via an Auger analysis of the metal ohmic contact.

10 In some embodiments according to the invention, a normalized transmissivity of the metal ohmic contact is about 92% at a measurement wavelength of about 350 nm. In some embodiments according to the invention, the metal ohmic contact covers a portion of the p-type nitride layer and a remaining portion of the p-type nitride layer is un-covered by the metal ohmic contact.

15 In some embodiments according to the invention, the metal ohmic contact has an average thickness less than about 3 Å. In some embodiments according to the invention, the metal ohmic contact covers less than about 28% of the p-type nitride layer measured via an Auger analysis of the metal ohmic contact.

In some embodiments according to the invention, the normalized
20 transmissivity of the metal ohmic contact is about 94% to about 96% at a measurement wavelength of about 350 nm. In some embodiments according to the invention, the metal ohmic contact has an average thickness of about 1 Å. In some embodiments according to the invention, the metal ohmic contact covers less than about 13% of the p-type nitride layer measured via an Auger analysis of the metal
25 ohmic contact. In some embodiments according to the invention, a normalized transmissivity of the metal ohmic contact is more than about 98% at a measurement wavelength of about 350 nm.

In some embodiments according to the invention, the metal ohmic contact can be platinum, rhodium, zinc oxide, palladium, palladium oxide, titanium, nickel/gold,
30 nickel oxide/gold, nickel oxide/platinum and/or titanium/gold. In some embodiments according to the invention, the LED can also include a bonding pad on the metal ohmic contact.

In some embodiments according to the invention, an LED can include a p-type nitride layer and a metal ohmic contact, thereon, where the metal ohmic contact has an average thickness of about 1 Å. In some embodiments according to the invention, and LED can include a p-type nitride layer and a metal ohmic contact thereon. The metal ohmic contact can have an average thickness of about 1 Å that covers about 13% of the p-type nitride layer measured via an Auger analysis of the metal ohmic contact.

In some embodiments according to the invention, an LED includes a p-type nitride layer and a metal ohmic contact thereon. The metal ohmic contact can have an average thickness sufficient to provide a normalized transmissivity of more than about 98% at a measurement wavelength of about 350 nm.

In some embodiments according to the invention, a method of forming a semiconductor based Light Emitting Device (LED) can be provided by forming a p-type nitride layer on an n-type substrate, forming a metal ohmic contact on the p-type nitride layer to an average thickness less than about 25 Å and a specific contact resistivity less than about 10^{-3} ohm-cm², and ceasing forming the metal ohmic contact.

In some embodiments according to the invention, forming a metal ohmic contact can further include depositing metal on the p-type nitride layer and on a witness slide for a time interval at a rate to provide a metal layer having a first average thickness for the metal ohmic contact and an indication of thickness of the metal layer on the witness slide is monitored. Metal is further deposited for subsequent time interval(s) and/or subsequent rate(s) to increase the average thickness if the indication is above a predetermined indication threshold. Deposition of the metal is ceased if the indication is about equal to or below the predetermined indication threshold.

In some embodiments according to the invention, the monitoring of the indication of thickness is provided by measuring transmissivity, sheet resistivity, capacitance, reflectance, and/or resonant frequency of the metal layer. In some embodiments according to the invention, the metal is further deposited until the indication exceeds the predetermined indication threshold. In some embodiments according to the invention, the rate of deposition is about 0.1 Å to about 0.5 Å per second.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a cross-sectional drawing illustrating some embodiments of the invention.

Figures 2A and 2B are top views of LED dice having ohmic contacts in accordance with some embodiments of the invention.

Figure 3 is a cross-sectional drawing illustrating further embodiments of the invention.

Figure 4 is a flowchart illustrating method embodiments of the invention.

Figure 5 is a graph of the transmissivity of platinum films of various thicknesses as measured over a range of wavelengths.

Figure 6 is a flowchart illustrating further method embodiments of the invention.

Figure 7 is a flowchart illustrating further method embodiments of the invention.

Figure 8 is a schematic diagram of a film deposition system in accordance with some embodiments of the invention.

Figures 9A and 9B are scanning transmission electron microscope (STEM) images of a Pt contact layer having an average thickness of about 10 Å according to some embodiments of the present invention.

Figures 10A and 10B are STEM images of a Pt contact layer having an average thickness of about 3 Å according to some embodiments of the present invention.

Figures 11A and 11B are STEM images of a Pt contact layer having an average thickness of about 1 Å according to some embodiments of the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS ACCORDING TO THE INVENTION

The present invention now will be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which embodiments of the invention are shown. This invention should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein; rather, these embodiments are provided so that this disclosure will be thorough and complete, and will fully convey the scope of the invention to those skilled in the art. Like numbers refer to like elements throughout.

Furthermore, the various layers and regions illustrated in the figures are illustrated schematically. As will also be appreciated by those of skill in the art, while the present invention is described with respect to semiconductor wafers and diced chips, such chips may be diced into arbitrary sizes. Accordingly, the present

invention is not limited to the relative size and spacing illustrated in the accompanying figures. In addition, certain features of the drawings such as layer thicknesses and feature sizes are illustrated in exaggerated dimensions for clarity of drawing and ease of explanation.

5 The terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular embodiments only and is not intended to be limiting of the invention. As used herein, the singular forms "a", "an" and "the" are intended to include the plural forms as well, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. It will be further understood that the terms "comprises" and/or "comprising," when used in this specification, specify the
10 presence of stated features, integers, steps, operations, elements, and/or components, but do not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other features, integers, steps, operations, elements, components, and/or groups thereof.

 It will be understood that when an element or layer is referred to as being
15 "on", "connected to" or "coupled to" another element or layer, it can be directly on, connected or coupled to the other element or layer or intervening elements or layers may be present. In contrast, when an element is referred to as being "directly on,"
"directly connected to" or "directly coupled to" another element or layer, there are no intervening elements or layers present. Like numbers refer to like elements
20 throughout. As used herein, the term "and/or" includes any and all combinations of one or more of the associated listed items.

 It will be understood that, although the terms first, second, etc. may be used herein to describe various elements, components, regions, layers and/or sections, these elements, components, regions, layers and/or sections should not be limited by these terms. These terms are only used to distinguish one element, component, region,
25 layer or section from another region, layer or section. Thus, a first element, component, region, layer or section discussed below could be termed a second element, component, region, layer or section without departing from the teachings of the present invention.

 Furthermore, relative terms, such as "lower" or "bottom" and "upper" or "top,"
30 may be used herein to describe one element's relationship to another elements as illustrated in the Figures. It will be understood that relative terms are intended to encompass different orientations of the device in addition to the orientation depicted in the Figures. For example, if the device in the Figures is turned over, elements

described as being on the "lower" side of other elements would then be oriented on "upper" sides of the other elements. The exemplary term "lower", can therefore, encompasses both an orientation of "lower" and "upper," depending of the particular orientation of the figure. Similarly, if the device in one of the figures is turned over, elements described as "below" or "beneath" other elements would then be oriented "above" the other elements. The exemplary terms "below" or "beneath" can, therefore, encompass both an orientation of above and below.

As used herein in connection with the thickness of ohmic contacts, the term "about" means within a tolerance of $\pm 1 \text{ \AA}$.

Unless otherwise defined, all terms (including technical and scientific terms) used herein have the same meaning as commonly understood by one of ordinary skill in the art to which this invention belongs. It will be further understood that terms, such as those defined in commonly used dictionaries, should be interpreted as having a meaning that is consistent with their meaning in the context of the relevant art and this specification and will not be interpreted in an idealized or overly formal sense unless expressly so defined herein.

Embodiments of the present invention are described herein with reference to cross-section illustrations that are schematic illustrations of idealized embodiments of the present invention. As such, variations from the shapes of the illustrations as a result, for example, of manufacturing techniques and/or tolerances, are to be expected. Thus, embodiments of the present invention should not be construed as limited to the particular shapes of regions illustrated herein but are to include deviations in shapes that result, for example, from manufacturing. For example, a region illustrated as a rectangle will, typically, have rounded, curved or graded features at its edges rather than a discrete change from one region to the next. Thus, the regions illustrated in the figures are schematic in nature and their shapes are not intended to illustrate the precise shape of a region of a device and are not intended to limit the scope of the present invention.

Embodiments of the invention now will be described, generally with reference to gallium nitride-based light emitting diodes on silicon carbide-based substrates. However, it will be understood by those having skill in the art that many embodiments of the invention may be employed with many different combinations of substrate and epitaxial layers. For example, combinations can include AlGaInP

diodes on GaP substrates; InGaAs diodes on GaAs substrates; AlGaAs diodes on GaAs substrates; SiC diodes on SiC or sapphire (Al_2O_3) substrates; and/or nitride-based diodes on gallium nitride, silicon carbide, aluminum nitride, sapphire, zinc oxide and/or other substrates.

- 5 GaN-based light emitting devices typically comprise an insulating, semiconducting or conductive substrate such as SiC or sapphire on which a plurality of GaN-based epitaxial layers are deposited. The epitaxial layers comprise an active region having a p-n junction that emits light when energized.

Although various embodiments of LEDs disclosed herein include a substrate, it
10 will be understood by those skilled in the art that the crystalline epitaxial growth substrate on which the epitaxial layers comprising an LED are grown may be removed, and the freestanding epitaxial layers may be mounted on a substitute carrier substrate or submount which may have better thermal, electrical, structural and/or optical characteristics than the original substrate. The invention described herein is
15 not limited to structures having crystalline epitaxial growth substrates and may be utilized in connection with structures in which the epitaxial layers have been removed from their original growth substrates and bonded to substitute carrier substrates.

Light emitting devices for use in embodiments of the present invention may be gallium nitride based light emitting diodes or lasers fabricated on a silicon carbide
20 substrate such as those devices manufactured and sold by Cree, Inc. of Durham, North Carolina. For example, the present invention may be suitable for use with LEDs and/or lasers as described in United States Patent Nos. 6,740,906, 6,734,033, 6,664,560, 6,201,262, 6,187,606, 6,120,600, 5,912,477, 5,739,554, 5,631,190, 5,604,135, 5,523,589, 5,416,342, 5,393,993, 5,338,944, 5,210,051, 5,027,168,
25 5,027,168, 4,966,862 and/or 4,918,497, the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference as if set forth fully herein. Other suitable LEDs and/or lasers are described in United States Patent Publication No. 2003/0006418, entitled "GROUP III NITRIDE BASED LIGHT EMITTING DIODE STRUCTURES WITH A QUANTUM WELL AND SUPERLATTICE, GROUP III NITRIDE BASED
30 QUANTUM WELL STRUCTURES AND GROUP III NITRIDE BASED SUPERLATTICE STRUCTURES," and United States Patent Application Serial No. 10/899,791 (Attorney Docket No. 5308-204IP), entitled "GROUP III NITRIDE BASED QUANTUM WELL LIGHT EMITTING DEVICE STRUCTURES WITH

AN INDIUM CONTAINING CAPPING STRUCTURE," filed July 27, 2004, United States Patent Application Serial No. 10/881,814 (Attorney Docket No. 5308-457) entitled "LIGHT EMITTING DEVICES HAVING CURRENT BLOCKING STRUCTURES AND METHODS OF FABRICATING LIGHT EMITTING DEVICES HAVING CURRENT BLOCKING STRUCTURES," filed June 30, 2004 and/or United States Patent Application Serial No. 10/899,793 (Attorney Docket No. 5308-468) entitled "LIGHT EMITTING DEVICES HAVING A REFLECTIVE BOND PAD AND METHODS OF FABRICATING LIGHT EMITTING DEVICES HAVING A REFLECTIVE BOND PAD," filed July 27, 2004, the disclosures of which are incorporated herein as if set forth fully.

In particular embodiments of the present invention, the light emitting devices may include a p-electrode that provides a reflecting layer to reflect light generated in the active region back through the device. Reflective p-electrodes and related structures are described in U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0123164 entitled "LIGHT EMITTING DIODES INCLUDING SUBSTRATE MODIFICATIONS FOR LIGHT EXTRACTION AND MANUFACTURING METHODS THEREFOR" and in U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0168663 entitled " REFLECTIVE OHMIC CONTACTS FOR SILICON CARBIDE INCLUDING A LAYER CONSISTING ESSENTIALLY OF NICKEL, METHODS OF FABRICATING SAME, AND LIGHT EMITTING DEVICES INCLUDING THE SAME," the disclosures of which are hereby incorporated by reference as if set forth fully herein.

As used herein the term "ohmic contact" refers to contacts where an impedance associated therewith is substantially given by the relationship of $\text{Impedance} = V/I$, where V is a voltage across the contact and I is the current, at substantially all expected operating frequencies (*i.e.*, the impedance associated with the ohmic contact is substantially the same at all operating frequencies). For example, in some embodiments according to the invention, an ohmic contact can be a contact with a specific contact resistivity of less than about 10^{-03} ohm-cm² and, in some embodiments less than about 10^{-04} ohm-cm². Thus, a contact that is rectifying or that has a high specific contact resistivity, for example, a specific contact resistivity of greater than about 10^{-03} ohm-cm², is not an ohmic contact as that term is used herein.

An LED may be mounted substrate side down onto a submount such as a metal plate, printed circuit board or lead frame (all of which are referred to herein as a

"submount"). **Figure 1** schematically illustrates an LED 1 having an n-type SiC substrate 10, an active region 12 comprising an n-GaN-based layer 14 and a p-GaN-based layer 16 grown on the substrate and patterned into a mesa. A metal p-electrode 18 is deposited on and electrically coupled to the p-GaN layer 16 and a wire bond connection 28 is made to a bond pad 20 on the p-electrode 18. An n-electrode 22 on and electrically coupled to the conductive substrate is attached to conductive submount 24 using a conductive epoxy 26. The epoxy 26 is heat cured which causes it to harden, providing a stable and electrically conductive mount for the LED chip. Light generated in the active region 12 is directed up and out of the device. However, a portion of the generated light may be absorbed by the ohmic p-electrode 18 (sometimes referred to herein as the ohmic contact 18).

In order to reduce and/or minimize absorption of light by the p-electrode 18, the thickness of the p-electrode can be reduced below 25 Å in accordance with some embodiments of the present invention. Some embodiments of the present invention provide an ultrathin p-contact metal that may be deposited in a way that is reproducible, controllable, and manufacturable. In some embodiments, the ohmic contact 18 comprises platinum. Other materials may be used for the ohmic contact 18. For example, the ohmic contact 18 may comprise rhodium, zinc oxide, palladium, palladium oxide, titanium, nickel/gold, nickel oxide/gold, nickel oxide/platinum and/or titanium/gold. In some embodiments, the ohmic contact 18 has an average thickness less than 25 Å. In further embodiments, the ohmic contact 18 has an average thickness less than 20 Å. In some embodiments, the ohmic contact 18 may have an average thickness between 13 and 18 Å. In further embodiments, the ohmic contact 18 may have an average thickness of about 15 Å +/- 1 Å. In some embodiments, the ohmic contact 18 has an average thickness less than 10 Å. In some embodiments, the ohmic contact 18 has an average thickness less than 5 Å, and in further embodiments, the ohmic contact 18 has an average thickness less than 3 Å. In still further embodiments, the ohmic contact has an average thickness of about 1 Å.

It will be understood by those skilled in the art that film thicknesses less than 10 Å, and in particular film thicknesses less than 5 Å, may represent partial or sub-monolayer coverage of the surface. Thus, even though the resulting layer is referred to as a "film", the film may only partially cover the surface of the p-type GaN layer. Furthermore, some of uncovered portions of the p-type GaN layer can be

characterized as "exposed" as those portions are not covered by a film thicker than the minimum average thickness of the metal ohmic contact (*e.g.*, the exposed portions are covered by a sub-monolayer of the metal ohmic contact).

Thus, some embodiments of the present invention provide a contact layer with
5 coverage of less than 70%. Further embodiments of the present invention provide a contact layer with coverage of less than 50%. Still further embodiments of the present invention provide a contact layer with coverage of less than 30%. Additional embodiments of the present invention provide a contact layer with coverage of less than 20%. As used herein, when the metal ohmic contact is described as covering
10 "only" a particular percentage of the p-type nitride layer (*e.g.*, 70%) it will be understood that the remaining portion (*e.g.*, 30%) of the p-type nitride layer can be uncovered (*i.e.*, exposed) or covered by portions of the metal ohmic contact which are less than the average thickness of the metal ohmic contact covering the p-type nitride layer. Furthermore, these percentages of coverage are not to be interpreted to include
15 portions of the p-type nitride which are not beneath the outer edges of the metal ohmic contact (*e.g.*, such as an oversized p-type nitride layer).

Ohmic contacts according to some embodiments of the present invention may be formed by electron beam (e-beam) evaporation or any other suitable techniques for controllably forming atomically thin metallic films. For example, it may be possible
20 to form the ohmic contacts by electroplating provided adequate process control is maintained. In electron beam evaporation, a metal source target is heated in a vacuum chamber to the point of vaporization by a high intensity electron beam which melts a region of the target. An epitaxial wafer placed within the chamber is controllably coated with vaporized metal. E-beam evaporation and other film deposition methods
25 are described in Chapter 6 of INTRODUCTION TO MICROELECTRONIC FABRICATION by R. Jaeger (2nd Ed. 2002).

The deposition rate of the process may be controlled by changing the current and energy of the electron beam. In some embodiments, the deposition rate is maintained at a low rate, *e.g.* in the range of 0.1-0.5 Å per second in order to maintain
30 adequate control of film thickness. In addition, the film deposition may be controlled during deposition by monitoring the transmission properties of a witness slide on which the ohmic metal film is simultaneously deposited. The witness slide may be sapphire, quartz, or any other optically transmissive material on which a metal film

may be deposited. The transmission sensitivity to the metal thickness is dependent upon the wavelength of the light used in the monitoring process. Namely, the transmission sensitivity may be enhanced at shorter wavelengths. Accordingly, in some embodiments, the transmission properties of a sapphire witness slide are
5 measured during or after film deposition by means of a monitoring system employing a UV source capable of emitting light at wavelengths of 350 nm or less, such as a UV spectrophotometer. The slow deposition rate may allow for reproducible and controllable deposition of the thin layer.

The ohmic contact 18 may have a thickness range of 1-25 Å. For platinum
10 contacts to flip-chip devices, the preferred thickness is 1-5 Å. Flip-chip devices typically include additional metal layers blanket deposited on the ohmic contact. For example, there may be a reflector layer 30 illustrated in Figure 3, as well as barrier, bonding, and/or adhesion layers which form metal stack 32. Accordingly, current spreading may occur in the reflector layer 30 and/or metal stack 32. For platinum
15 contacts to non-flip-chip devices, the preferred thickness is 13-18 Å, and a bond pad including metal current spreading fingers is formed on the ohmic contact 18.

Once deposited, the ohmic contact 18 provides an ohmic or non-rectifying contact "as deposited." That is, no further processing or annealing may be required in order to provide a quasi-ideal electrical contact to the p-type GaN layer 16. However,
20 in some cases it may be necessary or desirable to anneal the ohmic contact 18 or perform other post-deposition processing in order to improve its ohmic characteristics (such as to reduce the specific contact resistance of the contact layer, for example).

In some embodiments, methods according to the present invention include forming an n-type epitaxial layer on a substrate, forming a p-type epitaxial layer on
25 the n-type epitaxial layer to thereby provide a device precursor structure, placing the device precursor structure in an e-beam evaporation system, placing a witness slide in the evaporation system, and forming a layer of platinum on the device precursor structure and the witness slide while simultaneously monitoring the transmissivity of the metal film on the witness slide. In some embodiments, deposition of the ohmic
30 contact metal may be halted before the normalized transmissivity of the metal film on the witness slide falls below 98% at a measurement wavelength of 350 nm. In other embodiments, deposition of the ohmic contact metal may be halted before the normalized transmissivity of the metal film on the witness slide falls below 96% at a

measurement wavelength of 350 nm. In further embodiments, deposition of the ohmic contact metal may be halted before the normalized transmissivity of the metal film on the witness slide falls below 92% at a measurement wavelength of 350 nm.

As illustrated in **Figure 5**, the normalized transmissivity of a metal film deposited on a witness slide varies depending on the thickness of the film and the wavelength of light used in the measurement. Stated differently, the absorptivity of the metal film is a function of both the film thickness and the wavelength of light passing through the film. As is apparent from the graph of **Figure 5**, the greatest variation in absorptivity as a function of thickness occurs at lower wavelengths. For example, at a wavelength of 350 nm, a 1 Å platinum film exhibits a transmissivity of between 98 and 100%, while a film having an average thickness of 3 Å exhibits a transmissivity of between 94 and 96%, and a film having an average thickness of 5 Å exhibits a transmissivity of about 92%. The effect is even more pronounced at lower wavelengths.

Accordingly, in some embodiments, the transmission properties of a sapphire witness slide are monitored during film deposition by means of a monitoring system employing a UV source capable of emitting light at wavelengths of 350 nm or less. By monitoring in situ the transmissivity of a metal film formed on a calibrated witness slide, the deposition process may be halted before or after the transmissivity of the metal film reaches a predetermined threshold level. Accordingly, the deposition of extremely thin metal films may be controlled with a high degree of precision according to embodiments of the invention.

In some embodiments, deposition of the ohmic contact may be halted before the normalized transmissivity of the metal film on the witness slide falls below 98% at a measurement wavelength of 350 nm. In other embodiments, deposition of the ohmic contact may be halted before the normalized transmissivity of the metal film on the witness slide falls below 96% at a measurement wavelength of 350 nm. In further embodiments, deposition of the ohmic contact may be halted before the normalized transmissivity of the metal film on the witness slide falls below 92% at a measurement wavelength of 350 nm.

Other methods of monitoring the thickness of the deposited metal film may be employed. For example, other physical, electrical or optical characteristics of the film (or the material on which the film is deposited) which vary according to film

thickness may be measured and compared against known standards to determine film thickness. Such characteristics may include, but are not limited to, sheet resistivity, capacitance, or reflectance of the film. In one embodiment, the resonant frequency of a quartz crystal coated with the evaporating material during deposition is monitored.

- 5 The resonant frequency of the crystal shifts in proportion to the thickness of the deposited film and may provide a sufficiently accurate measure of film thickness. See Chapter 6 of INTRODUCTION TO MICROELECTRONIC FABRICATION by R. Jaeger (2nd Ed. 2002).

10 In order to facilitate current spreading, the bond pad may include one or more current spreading fingers extending across portions of the ohmic contact. As illustrated in **Figures 2A and 2B**, the bond pad 20 formed on the ohmic contact 18 may include one or more current spreading fingers 21 which extend from the bond pad 20 across portions of the ohmic contact 18. The current spreading fingers 21 may be straight as illustrated in **Figure 2A** or curved as shown in **Figure 2B**. Other
15 configurations are possible. Although the embodiments illustrated in **Figures 2A and 2B** include four fingers 21 each, a greater or smaller number of fingers 21 may be used depending on the amount of current spreading desired.

Figure 3 illustrates other LEDs according to some embodiments of the invention in which the LED is designed to be flip-chip mounted (i.e. mounted
20 substrate side up). **Figure 3** schematically illustrates an LED 2 having an n-type SiC substrate 10, an active region 12 comprising an n-GaN-based layer 14 and a p-GaN-based layer 16 grown on the substrate and patterned into a mesa. A metal p-electrode 18 is deposited on and electrically coupled to the p-GaN layer 16 and a wire bond connection 28 is made to a bond pad 20 on the p-electrode 18. An n-electrode 22 on
25 and electrically coupled to the conductive substrate 10 includes a bond pad 20 to which a wire bond connection 28 is made. In the embodiment of **Figure 3**, the LED further includes a reflector 30. A metal stack 32 such as the metal stacks described in the above-referenced U.S. Patent No. 6,740,906 is formed on reflector 30 to provide barrier, adhesion and/or bonding layers for example. The entire device is then
30 mounted on a submount 24 by means of solder 34.

In order to reduce or minimize absorption of light by the p-electrode 18 so that more light can be reflected by reflector 30, the thickness of the p-electrode is reduced below 25 Å in accordance with the invention. In some embodiments, the p-electrode

18 comprises platinum. Other materials may be used for the ohmic contact 18. For example, the ohmic contact 18 may comprise rhodium, zinc oxide, palladium, palladium oxide, titanium, nickel/gold, nickel oxide/gold, nickel oxide/platinum and/or titanium/gold. In some embodiments, the ohmic contact 18 has an average thickness less than 25 Å. In further embodiments, the ohmic contact 18 has an average thickness less than 20 Å. In some embodiments, the ohmic contact 18 may have an average thickness between 13 and 18 Å. In further embodiments, the ohmic contact 18 may have an average thickness of about 15 Å. In some embodiments, the ohmic contact 18 has an average thickness less than 10 Å. In some embodiments, the ohmic contact 18 has an average thickness less than 5 Å, and in further embodiments, the ohmic contact 18 has an average thickness less than 3 Å. In still further embodiments, the ohmic contact 18 has an average thickness of about 1 Å. In some embodiments, the ohmic contact 18 has an average thickness less than 10 Å and a coverage of less than about 70%. In some embodiments, the ohmic contact 18 has an average thickness less than 5 Å and a coverage of less than about 50% and in further embodiments, the ohmic contact 18 has an average thickness less than 3 Å and a coverage of less than about 30%. In still further embodiments, the ohmic contact 18 has an average thickness of about 1 Å and a coverage of less than about 15%.

The reflector 30 preferably is thicker than about 300 Å and preferably comprises aluminum and/or silver. Embodiments of Figure 3 can provide improved current spreading, since the reflector 30 contacts the thin transparent ohmic contact 18 over the entire surface area of the thin transparent ohmic contact 18. Thus, current need not travel horizontally through the ohmic contact 18, as may be the case in other embodiments. Current spreading thus may be enhanced in this embodiment. Other contact structures may be used, for example, those described in detail in U.S. Patent 6,740,906. As discussed above, highly reflective materials such as Al and Ag may make poor ohmic contacts to p-type GaN. Although the phenomenon has not been fully investigated, it is believed that providing an ultrathin layer of platinum between a p-type GaN layer and a silver reflector may reduce the work function of the silver at the interface sufficient to allow formation of a satisfactory ohmic contact between the reflector and the p-type GaN while maintaining a high degree of reflectivity.

Embodiments of the invention may reduce the optical losses in the LEDs that result from absorption in the p-contact metal. The p-contact metal may be required to

make an ohmic contact with a minimal voltage drop, but typically the contact metal introduces optical losses. Embodiments of the present invention may provide a contact with low optical loss, low contact resistance, and good metal-semiconductor adhesion suitable for high brightness nitride LEDs that employ either reflective or transparent p-side metal stacks. By reducing the p-contact metal to an extremely thin layer (e.g. 1.5 vs 25 Å of Pt), light output of a device may be increased substantially. For example, an improvement in light output of approximately 10% was achieved in a 300x300 µm square chip and an improvement of approximately 20% was achieved in a 900x900 µm square chip. The increased brightness levels may speed the introduction of solid state lighting sources into products for general illumination and other specialty illumination applications, such as automotive headlamps.

Figure 4 illustrates method embodiments of the invention. As illustrated in **Figure 4**, method embodiments may include fabricating a GaN based light emitting device precursor structure in step **100**. The step of fabricating a GaN based light emitting device precursor structure may include forming an n-type epitaxial layer on a substrate and forming a p-type epitaxial layer on the n-type epitaxial layer. In step **105**, the method includes placing the device precursor structure and a witness slide in metal film deposition system such as an e-beam evaporation system. Continuing with step **110**, the method includes depositing a metal film on the device precursor structure and the witness slide. The transmissivity of the metal film on the witness slide is measured in step **115**. If the transmissivity of the film reaches or falls below a predefined threshold (decision block **120**), the process is halted. Otherwise, metal film deposition is continued (step **110**).

In some embodiments, deposition of the ohmic contact metal may be halted before the normalized transmissivity of the metal film on the witness slide falls below 98% at a measurement wavelength of 350 nm. In other embodiments, deposition of the ohmic contact metal may be halted before the normalized transmissivity of the metal film on the witness slide falls below 96% at a measurement wavelength of 350 nm. In further embodiments, deposition of the ohmic contact metal may be halted before the normalized transmissivity of the metal film on the witness slide falls below 92% at a measurement wavelength of 350 nm.

Some embodiments of the invention include fabricating a GaN based LED precursor structure, placing the precursor structure along with a test substrate such as

a witness slide into a metal film deposition system, depositing a metal film on the precursor structure and the test substrate for a predetermined time at a predetermined deposition rate, and measuring the transmissivity of the film on the test substrate. If the transmissivity of the film is below a predetermined threshold (indicating that the metal film is too thick), the metal film is removed from the precursor structure, the precursor is placed back into the film deposition system, and a metal film is deposited on the precursor structure for a second predetermined time and/or deposition rate. The process may be repeated any number of times until an acceptable thickness has been deposited.

As illustrated in **Figure 6**, some embodiments of the invention include the steps of fabricating a GaN based LED precursor structure (step 200). The precursor structure is placed into a film deposition system along with a witness slide or other test substrate (step 205). A metal film is then deposited on the precursor structure and the witness slide (step 210). The thickness of the film on the witness slide is then measured (step 215) for example by measuring the transmissivity of the film. If the transmissivity is below a predetermined threshold (indicating that the film is too thick) (step 220), then the metal film may be removed from the structure (for example by etching) and the precursor structure is placed back into the film deposition system.

In other embodiments illustrated in **Figure 7**, the film thickness may be controlled by performing calibrating runs on test materials within the deposition system to determine the appropriate duration and rate of the deposition step. Accordingly, some embodiments of the invention include fabricating a GaN based LED precursor structure (step 300) placing a test substrate into a film deposition system (step 305), depositing a metal film on the test substrate for a predetermined time at a predetermined deposition rate (step 310), and measuring the thickness of the resulting film (step 315). If the film thickness falls within a predetermined desired range (step 320), a GaN based LED precursor structure is placed into the film deposition system (step 325) and a metal film is deposited on the precursor structure for the predetermined time and rate (step 330). If the film thickness is not within the predetermined range, then a second test substrate (or a reconditioned first test substrate) may be placed into the film deposition system (step 305) and a second film is deposited on the second test substrate for a second predetermined time and/or rate.

In further embodiments, the monitoring system may provide a signal output to the film deposition system when the film thickness reaches a threshold level. The film deposition system may stop the deposition process in response to the signal output from the monitoring system to provide automatic closed-loop control of the deposition process. **Figure 8** is a schematic diagram of a film deposition system **50** in accordance with embodiments of the invention. System **50** includes a vacuum chamber **52** in which a wafer carrier **54** is mounted. Wafer **56**, on which the metal film will be deposited, is mounted on wafer carrier **54** along with a witness slide or test structure **70**. Vacuum pump system **58** is coupled to the vacuum chamber **52** for pumping gas out of the chamber. Vacuum pump system **58** may comprise multiple pumps and gauges (not shown) to reduce the pressure inside vacuum chamber **52** to less than 10^{-3} Pa.

An e-beam generator **60** within the vacuum chamber generates a beam of electrons at a predetermined energy and directs the beam toward source target **64**. E-beam generator **60** is controlled by e-beam controller **62**. When the electron beam generated by e-beam generator **60** strikes the source target **64**, source material evaporates from source target **64** and redeposits on wafer **56** and witness slide **70**. A sensor **66** which may be mounted inside or outside the vacuum chamber measures the thickness of the deposited film by monitoring physical, electrical or optical characteristics of the witness slide which vary according to film thickness may be measured and compared against known standards to determine film thickness. As discussed above, such characteristics may include transmissivity, reflectivity, conductivity, resonant frequency or other characteristics. Sensor **66** is controlled by sensor controller **68** (which may in practical applications be the same as e-beam controller **62**). When sensor **66** detects that the deposited film thickness has reached a predetermined threshold, the monitoring system may provide a signal output to the e-beam controller **62**, causing the e-beam controller to stop the deposition process. Accordingly, a system **50** in accordance with embodiments of the invention may provide automatic closed-loop control of the deposition process.

Contact layers were fabricated as described above at thicknesses of 25 Å, 10 Å, 3 Å and 1 Å. The contact layers were Pt. The 25 Å layer was assumed to be a continuous layer of Pt. STEM images were obtained for the 10 Å, 3 Å and 1 Å layers. The STEM images are shown in **Figures 9A, 10A and 11A**. The STEM images show

a distinct change in the amount of Pt from 10 Å (**Figure 9A**) (>> 50% coverage) to 1 Å (**Figure 11A**)(<< 50% coverage). In an attempt to quantify the amount of Pt, a threshold technique that removes the gray scale such that a pixel value above a certain value is assigned pure white (Pt) and a pixel value below a certain value gets assigned pure black was applied to the STEM images. The images after thresholding are seen in **Figures 9B, 10B and 11B**. While the selection of the threshold value may be subjective, comparing the thresholded image to the original, the fit appears to be consistent. By taking the ratio of black (no Pt) to white (Pt) an indication of coverage may be obtained. Table 1 below shows the analysis of the STEM images in **Figures 9B, 10B and 11B**.

Table 1. STEM Analysis

Sample	1500 kX B/W Ratio	Approximate Pt Coverage
10 Å	0.6406	0.61
3 Å	1.9924	0.33
1 Å	11	0.08

Auger surface analysis was also performed on the Pt layers. The results of the Auger surface analysis is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Auger Analysis

Auger Analysis							Pt Coverage
Sample	%Pt	%Ga	%N	%C	%O	%Cl	XÅ/25Å
1Å	7.7	34.3	19.1	30.6	7.1	1.3	0.13
3Å	16.3	27.7	14.4	33.9	6.7	1.1	0.28
5Å	27.3	21.0	10.6	34.5	5.4	1.2	0.47
10Å	39.4	14.2	3.8	36.9	5.4	0.2	0.67
25Å	58.7	2.0	2.3	33.0	3.7	0.3	1

As is seen in Table 2, assuming that the 25 Å layer is a continuous layer, then by Auger analysis, the 10 Å layer has about 67% coverage, the 5 Å layer has about 47 % coverage, the 3 Å layer has about 28 % coverage and the 1 Å layer has about 13% coverage. Accordingly, in some embodiments according to the present invention, the

average thickness of the metal ohmic contact is related to the % of the p-type nitride layer covered by the metal ohmic contact.

Many alterations and modifications may be made by those having ordinary skill in the art, given the benefit of the present disclosure, without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Therefore, it must be understood that the illustrated embodiments have been set forth only for the purposes of example, and that it should not be taken as limiting the invention as defined by the following claims. The following claims are, therefore, to be read to include not only the combination of elements which are literally set forth but all equivalent elements for performing substantially the same function in substantially the same way to obtain substantially the same result. The claims are thus to be understood to include what is specifically illustrated and described above, what is conceptually equivalent, and also what incorporates the essential idea of the invention.

15

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. A semiconductor based Light Emitting Device (LED) comprising:
a p-type nitride layer; and
5 a metal ohmic contact, on the p-type nitride layer, the metal ohmic contact comprising an average thickness of less than about 25 Å and a specific contact resistivity less than about 10^{-3} ohm-cm².
2. An LED according to Claim 1 wherein the metal ohmic contact covers
10 about 100% of the p-type nitride layer.
3. An LED according to Claim 1 wherein the metal ohmic contact covers less than 100% of the p-type nitride layer measured via an Auger analysis of the metal ohmic contact.
15
4. An LED according to Claim 2 wherein the metal ohmic contact comprises Pt.
5. An LED according to Claim 1 wherein the metal ohmic contact
20 comprises an average thickness less than about 20 Å.
6. An LED according to Claim 1 wherein the metal ohmic contact comprises an average thickness between about 13 Å and about 18 Å.
- 25 7. An LED according to Claim 1 wherein the metal ohmic contact comprises an average thickness less than about 10 Å.
8. An LED according to Claim 7 wherein the metal ohmic contact covers less than about 70% of the p-type nitride layer measured via an Auger analysis of the
30 metal ohmic contact.

9. An LED according to Claim 8 wherein the metal ohmic contact covers a portion of the p-type nitride layer and a remaining portion of the p-type nitride layer is un-covered by the metal ohmic contact.

5 10. An LED according to Claim 1 wherein the metal ohmic contact comprises an average thickness less than about 5 Å.

11. An LED according to Claim 10 wherein the metal ohmic contact covers less than about 47 % of the p-type nitride layer measured via an Auger analysis
10 of the metal ohmic contact.

12. An LED according to Claim 11 wherein a normalized transmissivity of the metal ohmic contact comprises at least about 92% at a measurement wavelength of about 350 nm.

15 13. An LED according to Claim 11 wherein the metal ohmic contact covers a portion of the p-type nitride layer and a remaining portion of the p-type nitride layer is un-covered by the metal ohmic contact.

20 14. An LED according to Claim 1 wherein the metal ohmic contact comprises an average thickness less than about 3 Å.

15. An LED according to Claim 14 wherein the metal ohmic contact covers less than about 28% of the p-type nitride layer measured via an Auger analysis
25 of the metal ohmic contact.

16. An LED according to Claim 15 wherein a normalized transmissivity of the metal ohmic contact comprises about 94% to about 96% at a measurement wavelength of about 350 nm.

30 17. An LED according to Claim 15 wherein the metal ohmic contact covers a portion of the p-type nitride layer and a remaining portion of the p-type nitride layer is un-covered by the metal ohmic contact.

18. An LED according to Claim 1 wherein the metal ohmic contact comprises an average thickness of about 1 Å.

5 19. An LED according to Claim 18 wherein the metal ohmic contact covers less than about 13% of the p-type nitride layer measured via an Auger analysis of the metal ohmic contact.

20. An LED according to Claim 19 wherein a normalized transmissivity of
10 the metal ohmic contact comprises more than about 98% at a measurement wavelength of about 350 nm.

21. An LED according to Claim 19 wherein the metal ohmic contact covers a portion of the p-type nitride layer and a remaining portion of the p-type
15 nitride layer is un-covered by the metal ohmic contact.

22. An LED according to Claim 1 wherein the metal ohmic contact comprises platinum, rhodium, zinc oxide, palladium, palladium oxide, titanium, nickel/gold, nickel oxide/gold, nickel oxide/platinum and/or titanium/gold.
20

23. A semiconductor based Light Emitting Device (LED) comprising:
a p-type nitride layer; and
a metal ohmic contact, on the p-type nitride layer, the metal ohmic contact comprising an average thickness of about 1 Å.
25

24. An LED according to Claim 18 wherein the metal ohmic contact covers less than about 13% of the p-type nitride layer measured via an Auger analysis of the metal ohmic contact.

30 25. A semiconductor based Light Emitting Device (LED) comprising:
a p-type nitride layer; and
a metal ohmic contact, on the p-type nitride layer, the metal ohmic contact comprising an average thickness of about 1 Å that covers less than about 13% of the

p-type nitride layer measured via an Auger analysis of the metal ohmic contact.

26. An LED according to Claim 25 wherein a normalized transmissivity of the metal ohmic contact comprises more than about 98% at a measurement wavelength of about 350 nm.

27. A semiconductor based Light Emitting Device (LED) comprising:
a p-type nitride layer; and
a metal ohmic contact, on the p-type nitride layer, the metal ohmic contact comprising an average thickness sufficient to provide a normalized transmissivity comprising more than about 98% at a measurement wavelength of about 350 nm.

28. An LED according to Claim 27 wherein the average thickness comprises about 1 Å.

15

29. An LED according to Claim 27 wherein the metal ohmic contact covers less than about 13% of the p-type nitride layer so that an uncovered portion of the p-type nitride layer is exposed through the metal ohmic contact.

30. A semiconductor based Light Emitting Device (LED) comprising:
an n-type semiconductor substrate;
an n-type GaN epi-layer on the substrate;
a p-type GaN epi-layer on the n-type GaN epi-layer;
a metal ohmic contact on the p-type GaN epi-layer, the metal ohmic contact comprising an average thickness less than about 25 Å and a specific contact resistivity less than about 10^{-3} ohm-cm²; and
a bonding pad on the metal ohmic contact.

31. An LED according to Claim 30 wherein the average thickness comprises about 5 Å to about 1 Å.

32. An LED according to Claim 30 wherein the metal ohmic contact covers less than about 13% to less than about 47% of the p-type nitride layer measured via an Auger analysis of the metal ohmic contact.

5 33. An LED according to Claim 30 wherein a normalized transmissivity of the metal ohmic contact comprises more than about 92% at a measurement wavelength of about 350 nm.

34. An LED according to Claim 30 wherein the average thickness
10 comprises about 13 Å to about 18 Å.

35. An LED according to Claim 30 further comprises:
current spreading fingers on the bonding pad extending across the metal ohmic
contact.

15

36. An LED according to Claim 35 wherein the current spreading fingers comprise straight or curved fingers.

37. A flip-chip semiconductor based Light Emitting Device (LED)
20 comprising:
an n-type semiconductor substrate;
an n-type GaN epi-layer on the substrate;
a p-type GaN epi-layer on the n-type GaN epi-layer;
a metal ohmic contact p-electrode on the p-type GaN epi-layer, the metal
25 ohmic contact p-electrode comprising an average thickness less than about 25 Å;
a reflector on the metal ohmic contact p-electrode;
a metal stack on the reflector;
an n-electrode on the substrate opposite the n-type GaN epi-layer; and
a bonding pad on the n-electrode.

30

38. An LED according to Claim 37 wherein the metal ohmic contact comprises an average thickness less than about 20 Å.

39. An LED according to Claim 37 wherein the metal ohmic contact comprises an average thickness of about 13 Å to about 20 Å.

40. An LED according to Claim 42 wherein the metal ohmic contact
5 comprises an average thickness less than about 15 Å.

41. An LED according to Claim 37 wherein the metal ohmic contact comprises an average thickness less than about 10 Å.

10 42. An LED according to Claim 41 wherein an average thickness comprising about 25 Å or greater comprises a metal ohmic contact p-electrode, wherein the metal ohmic contact p-electrode covers less than about 67% of the p-type GaN epi-layer.

15 43. An LED according to Claim 37 wherein the metal ohmic contact comprises an average thickness less than about 5 Å.

44. An LED according to Claim 43 wherein an average thickness comprising about 25 Å or greater comprises a metal ohmic contact p-electrode,
20 wherein the metal ohmic contact p-electrode covers less than about 47% of the p-type GaN epi-layer.

45. An LED according to Claim 37 wherein the metal ohmic contact comprises an average thickness less than about 3 Å.

25 46. An LED according to Claim 45 wherein an average thickness comprising about 25 Å or greater comprises a metal ohmic contact p-electrode, wherein the metal ohmic contact p-electrode covers less than about 28% of the p-type GaN epi-layer.

30 47. An LED according to Claim 37 wherein the metal ohmic contact comprises an average thickness of about 1 Å.

48. An LED according to Claim 47 wherein an average thickness comprising about 25 Å or greater comprises a metal ohmic contact p-electrode, wherein the metal ohmic contact p-electrode covers less than about 13% of the p-type GaN layer.

5

49. An LED according to Claim 37 wherein the reflector comprises a thickness greater than about 300 Å.

50. An LED according to Claim 49 wherein the reflector comprises
10 aluminum and/or silver.

51. A method of forming a semiconductor based Light Emitting Device (LED) comprising:

forming a p-type nitride layer on an n-type substrate;
15 forming a metal ohmic contact on the p-type nitride layer to less than 100% coverage of the p-type nitride layer measured via an Auger analysis of the metal ohmic contact; and
ceasing forming the metal ohmic contact.

20 52. A method according to Claim 51 wherein forming a metal ohmic contact further comprises
depositing metal on the p-type nitride layer and on a witness slide for a time interval at a rate to provide a metal layer having a first average thickness for the metal ohmic contact;

25 monitoring an indication of thickness of the metal layer on the witness slide;
further depositing metal for subsequent time interval(s) and/or subsequent rate(s) to increase the average thickness if the indication is above a predetermined indication threshold; and
ceasing depositing metal if the indication is about equal to or below the
30 predetermined indication threshold.

53. A method according to Claim 52 wherein monitoring an indication of thickness of the metal layer on the witness slide comprises measuring transmissivity,

sheet resistivity, capacitance, reflectance, and/or resonant frequency of the metal layer.

54. A method according to Claim 53 wherein:
- 5 transmissivity of about 92% at a measurement wavelength of about 350 nm indicates the thickness comprises average thickness less than about 5 Å;
- transmissivity of about 94% to about 96% at a measurement wavelength of about 350 nm indicates the thickness comprises average thickness less than about 3 Å;
- and
- 10 transmissivity of more than about 98% at a measurement wavelength of about 350 nm indicates the thickness comprises average thickness of about 1 Å.

55. A method according to Claim 52 wherein further depositing metal comprises continuing depositing metal until the indication exceeds the predetermined
- 15 indication threshold.

56. A method according to Claim 52 wherein the rate comprises about 0.1 Å to about 0.5 Å per second.

- 20 57. A method according to Claim 51 wherein forming a metal ohmic contact further comprises:
- depositing metal on the p-type nitride layer and on a witness slide for a time interval at a rate to provide a metal layer having a first average thickness for the metal ohmic contact;
- 25 monitoring an indication of thickness of the metal layer on the witness slide;
- ceasing depositing metal if the indication is about equal to or above a predetermined indication threshold; and
- removing the metal layer from the p-type nitride layer and the witness slide and then further depositing metal on the p-type nitride layer and the witness slide for
- 30 subsequent time interval(s) and/or at subsequent rate(s) if the indication is below the predetermined indication threshold

58. A method according to Claim 57 further comprising:

adjusting the subsequent time interval(s) and/or subsequent rate(s) for subsequent re-deposition of metal after removal until the metal layer is formed so that the associated indication is about equal to or above the predetermined indication threshold.

5

59. A method according to Claim 51 wherein forming a metal ohmic contact further comprises:

depositing metal on a first test substrate for a time interval at a rate to provide a first metal layer;

10 monitoring an indication of thickness of the first metal layer;

depositing metal on the p-type nitride layer for the time interval at the rate to provide the metal ohmic contact having the average thickness if the indication is within a thickness tolerance for the metal ohmic contact;

15 depositing metal on a second test substrate for a second time interval and/or at a second rate if the indication is not within the thickness tolerance to provide a second metal layer;

monitoring an indication of thickness of the second metal layer; and.

20 depositing metal on the p-type nitride layer for the second time interval and/or at the second rate to provide the metal ohmic contact having the average thickness if the indication of thickness of the second metal layer is within the thickness tolerance.

60. A method according to Claim 59, the method further comprising:
continuing depositing metal for different time intervals at the rate and
monitoring the thickness of the metal layer formed to determine a sufficient time
25 interval to form the metal layer to within the thickness tolerance.

61. A flip chip semiconductor based LED comprising:
a p-type nitride layer;
a metal ohmic contact p-electrode on the p-type nitride layer, the metal ohmic
30 contact p-electrode comprising an average thickness of less than about 25 Å; and
a reflector on the metal ohmic contact p-electrode.

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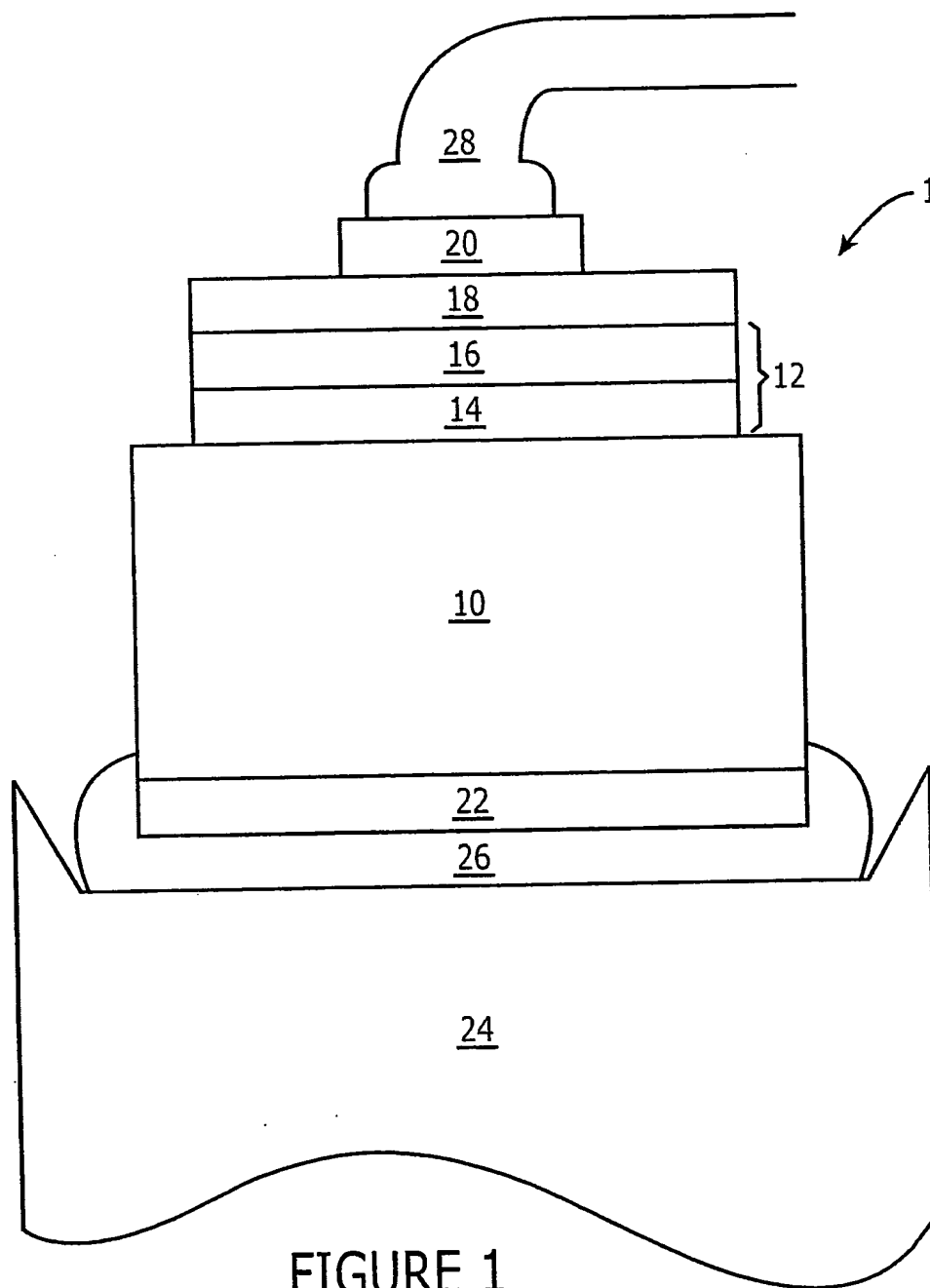


FIGURE 1

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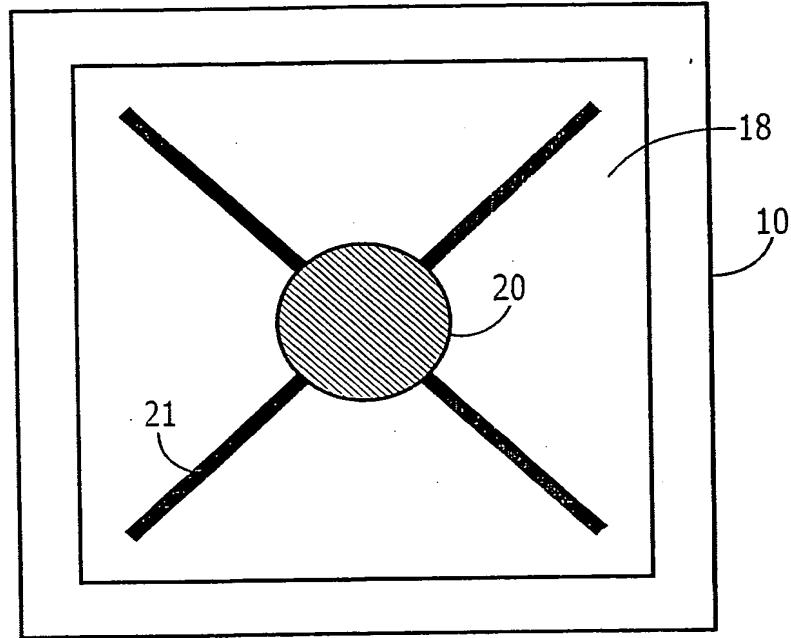


FIGURE 2A

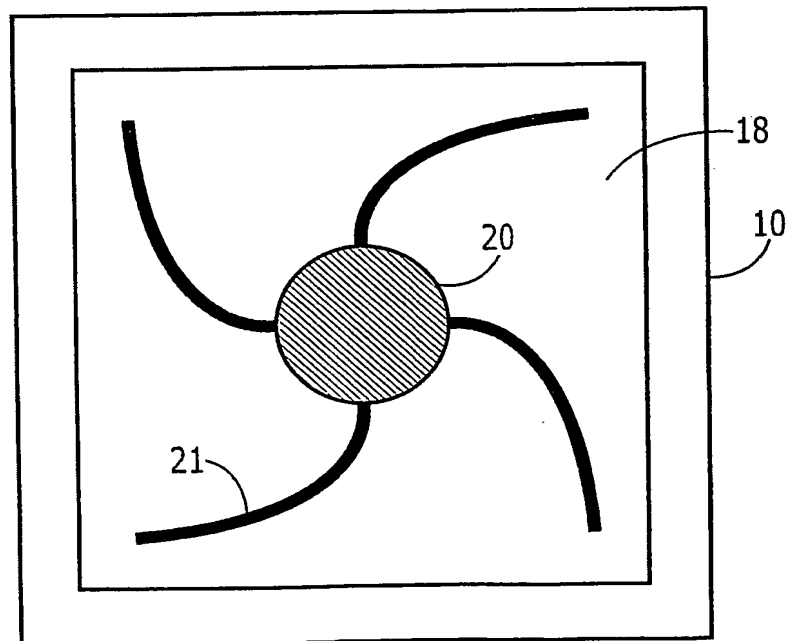
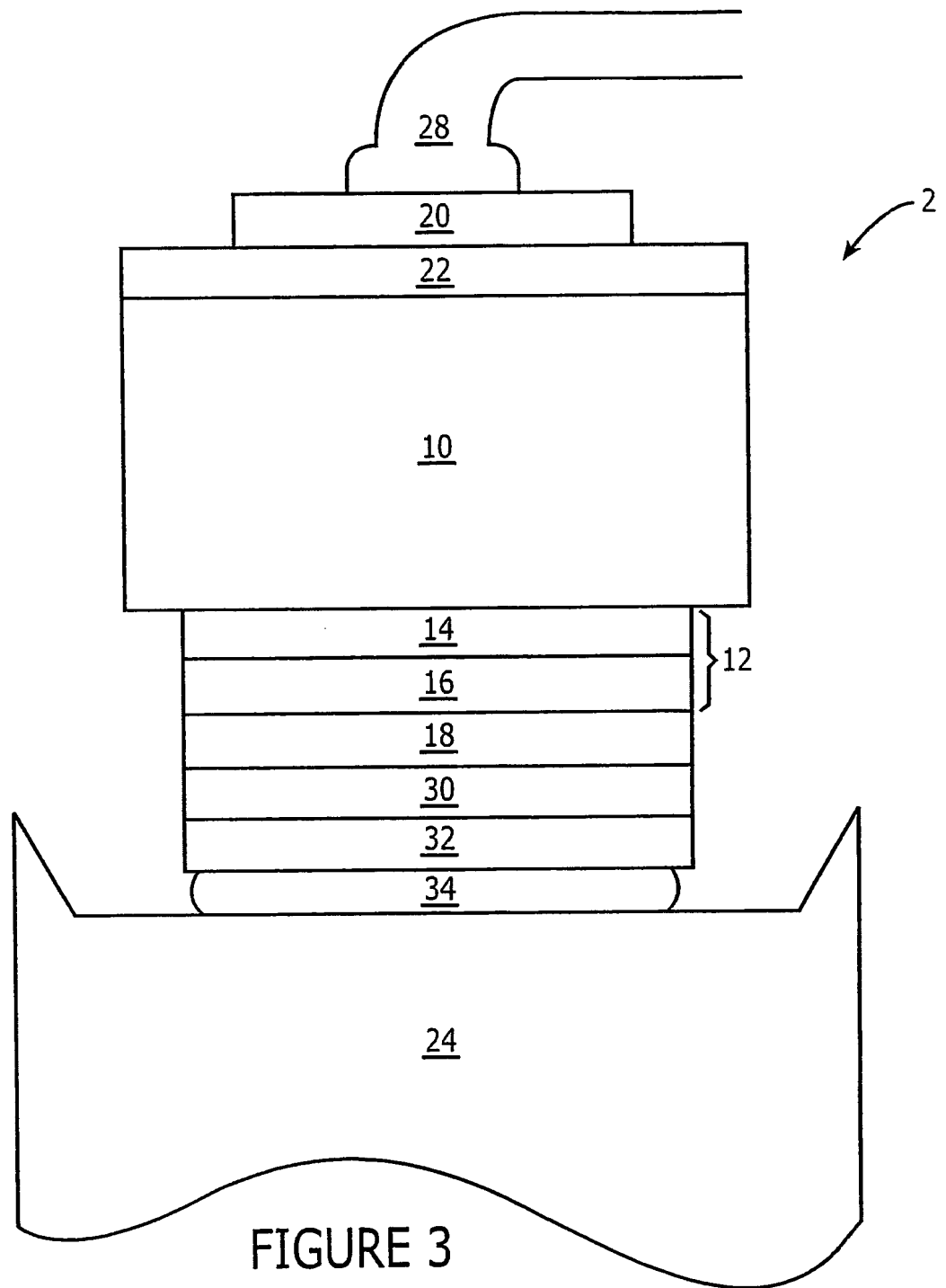


FIGURE 2B

3/11



4/11

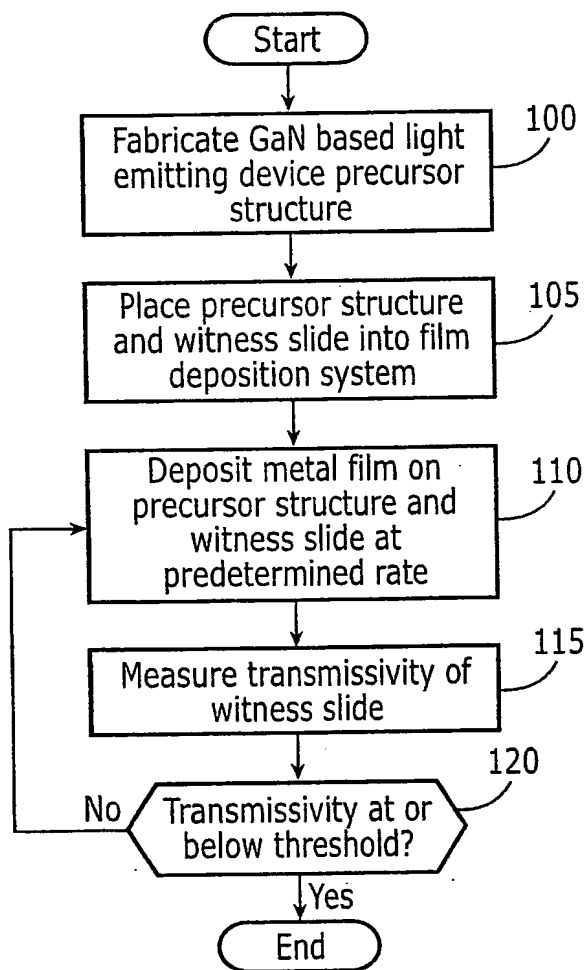


FIGURE 4

5/11

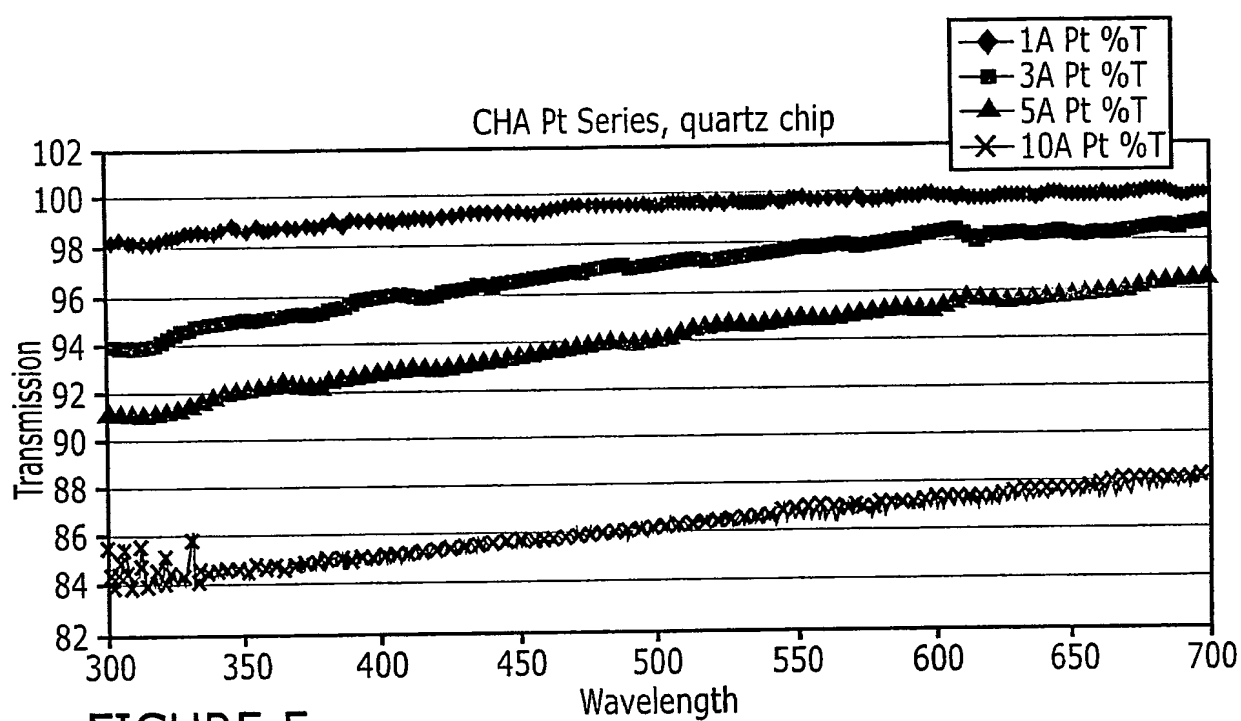


FIGURE 5

6/11

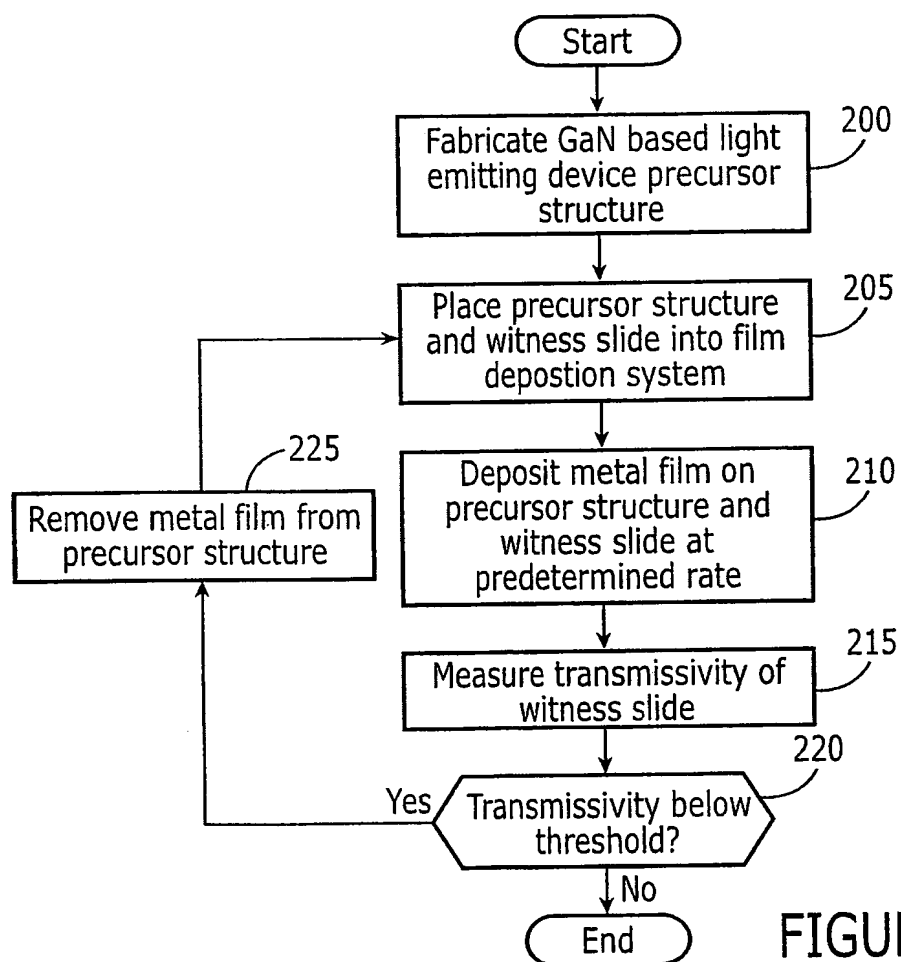


FIGURE 6

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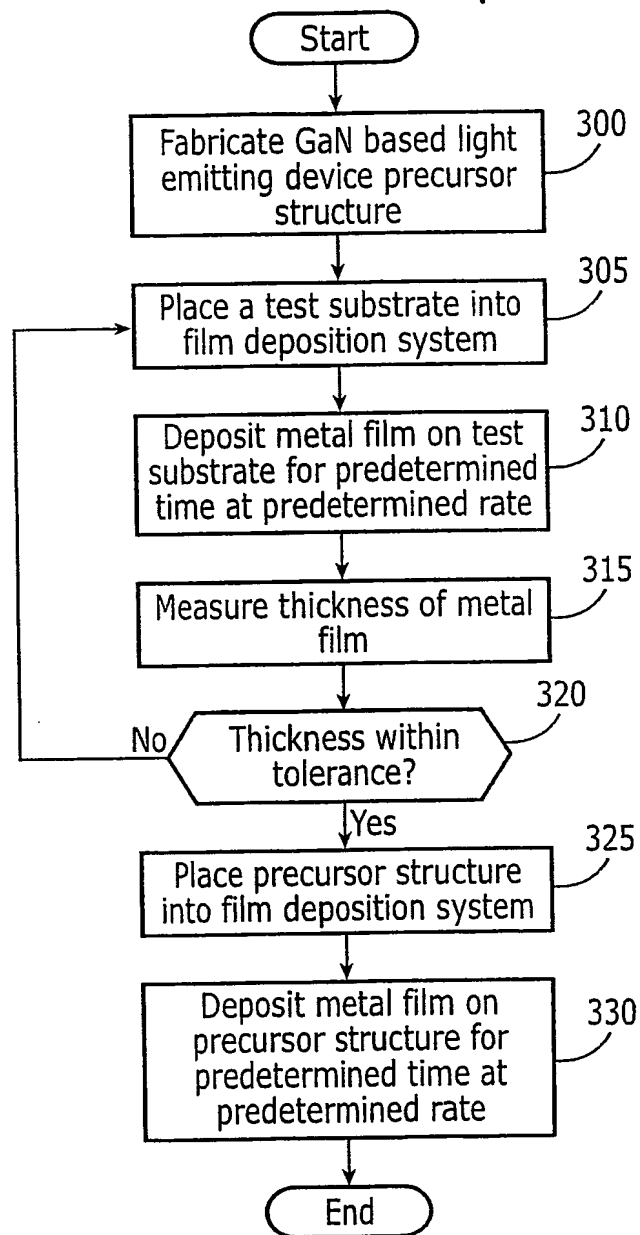


FIGURE 7

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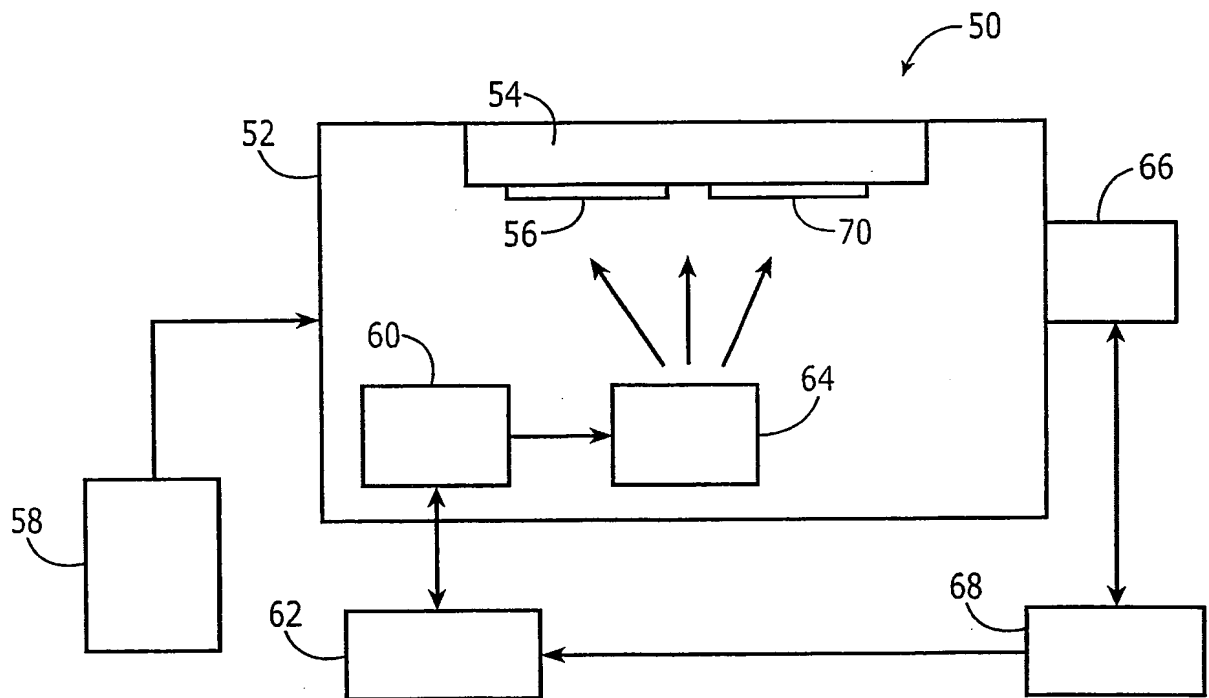


FIGURE 8

9/11

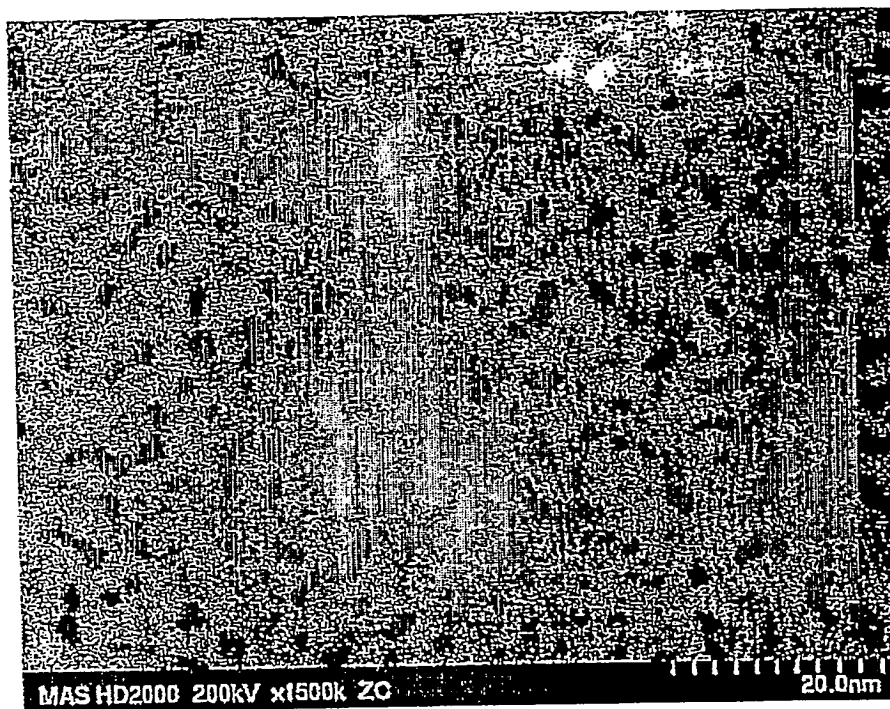


FIGURE 9A

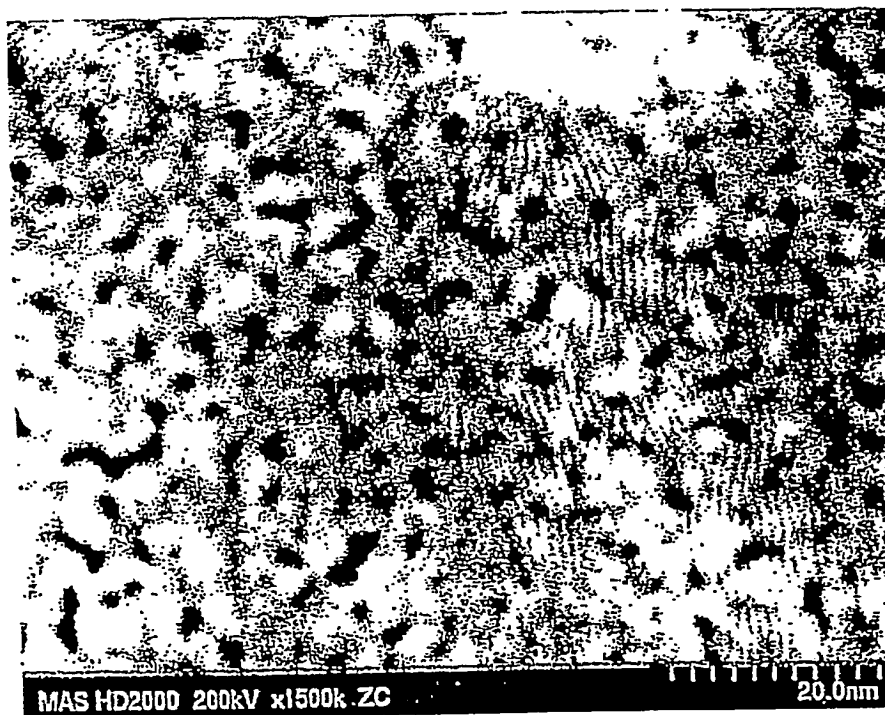


FIGURE 9B

10/11

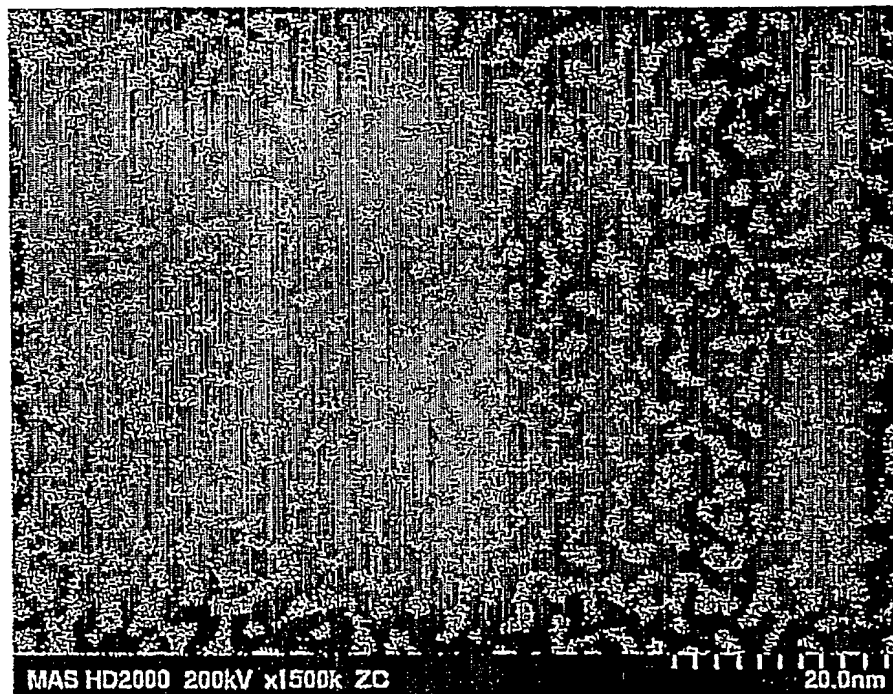


FIGURE 10A

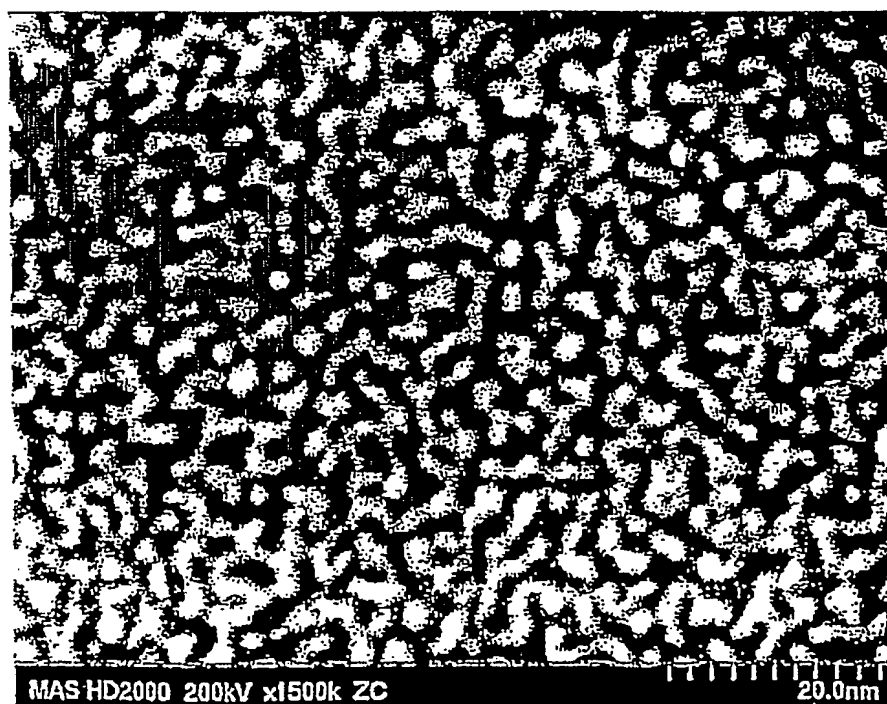


FIGURE 10B

11/11

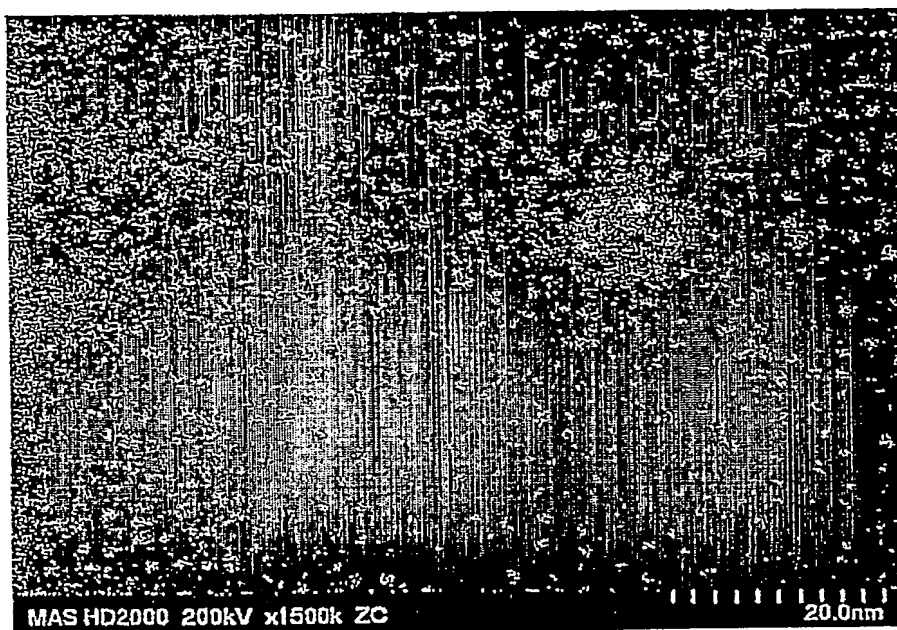


FIGURE 11A

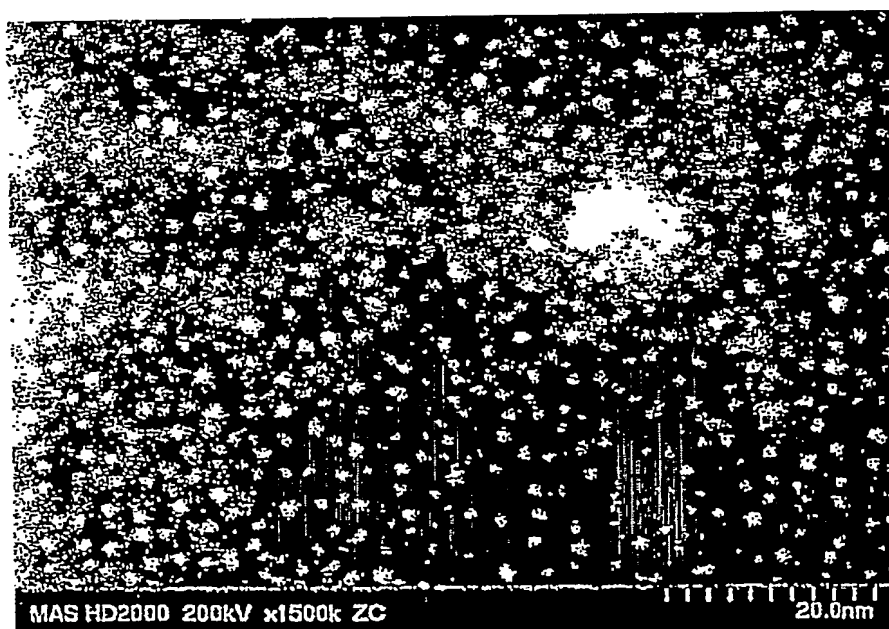


FIGURE 11B

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North Carolina 27516 (US). **EMERSON, David** [US/US]; 5519 New Rise Court, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27516 (US). **IBBETSON, James** [US/US]; 910 Randolph Road, Santa Barbara, California 93111 (US). **LI, Ting** [US/US]; 1018 Barber Lane, Ventura, California 93003 (US).

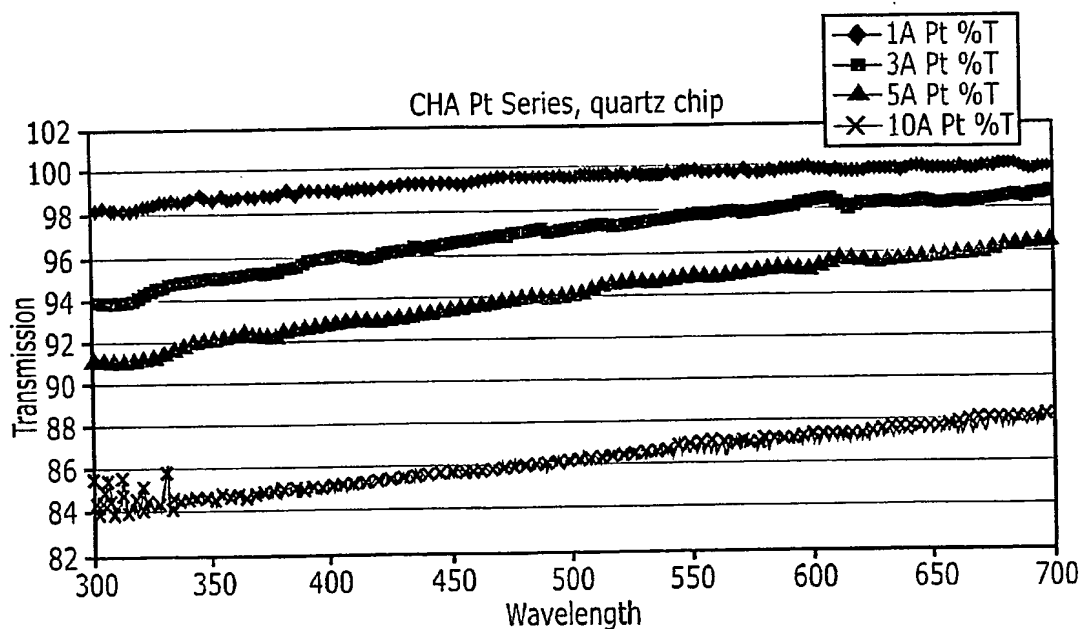
(74) Agent: **MYERS BIGEL SIBLEY & SAJOVEC, P.A.**; P.O. Box 37428, Raleigh, North Carolina 27627 (US).

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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: ULTRA-THIN OHMIC CONTACTS FOR P-TYPE NITRIDE LIGHT EMITTING DEVICES AND METHODS OF FORMING



(57) Abstract: A semiconductor based Light Emitting Device (LED) can include a p-type nitride layer and a metal ohmic contact, on the p-type nitride layer. The metal ohmic contact can have an average thickness of less than about 25 Å and a specific contact resistivity less than about 10^{-3} ohm-cm².



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International application No

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B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

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Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, PAJ, WPI Data

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 2002/117672 A1 (CHU MING-SUNG ET AL) 29 August 2002 (2002-08-29) paragraphs [0014], [0034] - [0037]; figure 5b -----	23,51
A	US 2003/209720 A1 (OKAZAKI HARUHIKO ET AL) 13 November 2003 (2003-11-13) figure 8 -----	37,61
A	US 2003/122144 A1 (UEMURA TOSHIYA ET AL) 3 July 2003 (2003-07-03) the whole document -----	1-61
A	US 2003/006422 A1 (MIKI HISAYUKI ET AL) 9 January 2003 (2003-01-09) the whole document -----	1-61

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

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Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US 2002117672	A1	29-08-2002	NONE
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US 2003122144	A1	03-07-2003	NONE
US 2003006422	A1	09-01-2003	NONE

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